

B) REMARKS:

1. Introduction

Claims 1-12 and are currently pending in this application. Claims 1 and 7 are independent. Certain amendments to claims 1 and 7 have been entered herein in response to the Examiner's rejections, as detailed hereinafter. Other amendments to claims 1, 2 and 4-12 have also been made to clarify the scope of that which the Applicants regard as their invention, and are not meant to unduly restrict the scope of those recitations that existed prior to such amendments or limit the applicability of any equivalents thereto.

No new subject matter has been added to this application by these amendments.

2. Objection to Claims

In paragraph 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner has objected to claims 2, 8 and 9 and requested that the acronyms therein be spelled out. The Applicant has amended the claims in response to these rejections by spelling out the acronyms as requested. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection of claims 2, 8 and 9 are respectfully requested.

3. Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

In paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected original claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,427,174 to Sitaraman et al. (hereinafter 'Sitaraman').

This rejection has been overcome by the following amendments entered to the Applicant's independent claims 1 and 7 herein:

(a) "storing a database that maintains separate ranges of network addresses for each of a plurality of available service provider networks, the network addresses for allocation to separate subscribers of the available service provider networks;" and

(b) "receiving a request from a subscriber operating a network access device to subscribe to a service provider network from the plurality of available service networks."

Support for these recitations can be found, inter alia, in the Applicant's Specification at:

(a) the last paragraph commencing at the end of page 12 (line 365), and continuing to page 13 (line 390); and

(b) the paragraph that commences on page 5 (line 143), and continues to page 6 (line 158).

The Applicants have been mindful of the provisions of MPEP §608.01(o) in making these amendments.

Sitaraman is devoid of any suggestion of managing customers of many different service networks through a common access point, by maintaining network address ranges for each of a plurality of service network. Instead, Sitaraman is specifically concerned throughout with the implementation of network communications through a single service provider that is accessible at many different access points. See, e.g. Col. 3, lines 10-16, Col. 4, lines 25-32; and Col. 5, lines 46-54 of Sitarman.

The recitations above are neither taught nor suggested by Sitaraman or any of the prior art of record (including those recited in paragraph 6 of the Office Action), or by any combination of the teachings of the same. Such references, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest applicants' method which enables multiple services or service providers to share the facilities of an access network infrastructure that provides physical connectivity to customers of the various services through a common access point, and which restricts customers to their selected service network while allowing individual network address to be allocated and reassigned dynamically (see Applicants' Summary of the Invention, page 2, line 33 to page 3, line 79).

Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1 and 7 are respectfully requested. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of remaining claims 2-6 and 8-12 are likewise respectfully requested based on their ultimate dependency on one of independent claims 1 and 7.

4. Conclusion

This amendment is responsive to each issue raised in the Office Action dated July 1, 2004. All objections and rejections of pending claims 1-12 have been overcome above. The Applicant therefore respectfully requests allowance of each of the pending claims 1-12 as amended herein, and issuance of the present application.

Please note that an APPOINTMENT OF NEW ATTORNEY AND CHANGE OF CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS has been filed with this Response. Please recognize the representation of, inter alia, the undersigned attorney and direct all correspondence to Mr. S.H. Dworetsky, AT&T Corp., Room 2A-207, One AT&T Way, Bedminster, NJ 07921 as stated therein. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney by telephone if it will advance the prosecution of this application.

In the event that a further extension of time is required in addition to that requested previously herein, the Commissioner is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to make this response timely and is hereby authorized to charge any fee for such an extension of time, or credit any overpayment, to the below-signed practitioner's deposit account number: 502396.

Respectfully submitted,

By:



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